

Arlington Conservation Land Stewards



STEWARDSHIP HANDBOOK

VOLUNTEERS FOR THE ARLINGTON CONSERVATION
COMMISSION

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**Pictures courtesy of Cori Beckwith*

1. Introduction

1.1 Overview

The Town of Arlington has approximately 54 acres of conservation land that is protected for the purpose of open space and recreation. The Park and Recreation Department owns 41% of this land. The preservation of this conservation land is vital to protecting wildlife and plant habitat and helps increase the quality of life for residents and visitors.

Most of this land is composed of small parcels scattered throughout the town. Who takes care of this land? The Arlington Conservation Commission (ACC) oversees the Arlington Conservation Land Stewards (ACLS) group to provide support and guidance for citizen volunteers who will take an active role in the protection of public land.

1.2 What is Land Stewardship?



The primary objective of the ACLS is to protect the land from litter and vandalism that threatens to pollute our ponds and streams and destroy plant and wildlife habitat. In achieving this objective stewards help beautify our outdoor spaces, ensuring clean spaces for all kinds of recreation.

Land stewards also help with larger clean-up efforts, invasive species control, trail maintenance, and erosion control and planting projects.

2. Land Steward Responsibilities

2.1 Basic Activities

Arlington Conservation Land Stewards (ACLS) do the following...

- ❖ Walk their chosen site on a regular basis (weekly preferred).
- ❖ Act as site liaisons to the Town entities which hold management responsibility for the site.
- ❖ Report problems and suggest ideas for improvements and maintenance. It is important to emphasize that land stewards are citizen volunteers and *should not* act as enforcers or place themselves at risk.
- ❖ Participate in site clean-ups.
- ❖ Assist in producing plant and wildlife inventories.

In addition, land stewards...

- ❖ Attend monthly meetings as a group to share ideas, solve problems, and plan activities.

Focus on What Makes the Most Impact!

Stewards should always feel comfortable removing trash and dumped materials. This is an easy activity that only has positive impacts for the site. But when it comes to natural debris such as fallen trees, stewards should use their best judgement in managing the associated leaves and branches. It is often better to tidy up the area, clearing pathways and streams, but not completely remove all of the debris, as it may provide habitats for creatures such as chipmunks and woodpeckers.

2.2 Monitoring a Site

Before conducting basic activities, a steward should first obtain a map of the site. This can be retrieved on the Town website using the interactive maps tool, or you can request a paper copy from the Conservation Agent in the Planning Department.

Once you have a map, walk the site and get familiar with it. Pay particular attention to ownership boundaries, streams, wetlands, adjacent land uses, and note any changes which may not be shown.

A site may have multiple stewards who may divide responsibilities amongst themselves. Some observations may require higher level intervention; use the Situation Management Table below to determine if such action is needed. Contact information for these departments is located at the back of the Handbook.

Situation Management Table				
Situation	Action			
	Call Police	Call Fire Dept.	Notify Conservation Agent	Call DPW
Destruction or removal of plants or animals	Y		Y	
Dumping	Y		Y	Y
Fire		Y	Y	
Firearms	Y		Y	
Hunting or trapping	Y		Y	
Rowdiness/drinking	Y		Y	
Tree cutting			Y	Y

**If at a Park and Recreation-owned site (Turkey Hill, Spy Pond Route 2 Path, Crusher Lot, or Hills Hill) please inform them of any issues you may have observed.*

3. Regulations

The following regulations were established in 2009 by the Arlington Conservation Commission under Chapter 40, Section 8C of the Massachusetts General Laws. Fines and/or remediation may be imposed on anyone found violating these regulations.

1. Conservation areas are open daily from dawn until dusk.
2. Removal, cutting or damage of trees, shrubs, plants, flowers or wildlife is not allowed.
3. Defacing of any natural or human made objects is not allowed.
4. Dumping of litter or garbage is not allowed. Carry out what you carry in.
5. Fires are not allowed.
6. Feeding of waterfowl is not allowed.
7. Alcoholic beverages are not allowed.
8. Hunting, shooting or trapping are not allowed. Fishing is allowed only where posted.
9. Camping is not allowed.
10. Bicycles are not allowed except on designated bike trails.
11. Dogs are not allowed off-leash except as posted by the Commission.
12. Vehicles are not allowed except for authorized maintenance activities.
13. Cutting of trails, erection of signs, building of structures, digging of holes, or damming of streams is not allowed except by written authorization of the Commission.
14. The use of conservation lands for commercial purposes is not allowed except by written authorization of the Commission.
15. Additional restrictions may be established in some areas for wildlife and habitat protection.
16. All public safety bylaws of the Town apply to conservation lands.

4. How to Become a Conservation Land Steward

Email: Environmental Planner/Conservation Agent, Lela Shepherd at lshepherd@town.arlington.ma.us

Phone: Call the Conservation Office at 781-316-3012

Provide the following information:

Name: _____

Street: _____

City: _____ State: _____ ZIP: _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____

Conservation Area(s) of Interest:

“Unless someone like you cares a whole awful lot,

Nothing is going to get better.

It’s not.”

-Dr. Seuss, The Lorax



How are we supported?

The Arlington Land Trust (an independent partnering organization) accepts donations to the ACC Stewardship Fund to assist in stewarding efforts. More information can be found at www.arlingtonlandtrust.org. If you wish to make a tax-deductible donation to help our conservation lands, you may indicate if you would like your donation used for a specific property or activity.

Emergency Contact Information

Department	Phone
24 Hour Fire Dispatch	781-643-4002
24 Hour Police Dispatch	781-316-3909
Public Works (DPW)	781-316-3108
Conservation	781-316-3012
Park and Recreation:	781-316-3880

Contact Us

Produced and Sponsored by the Arlington Conservation Commission (ACC).

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Web: <https://www.arlingtonma.gov/town-governance/all-boards-and-committees/conservation-commission/conservation-land-stewards>